Foundations in Literacy through the Bible

Dear Friends,

One of the most strategic courses Nungalinya College offers is the ‘Foundations Studies’ course in literacy and numeracy. Up to 150 students per year come to study this course and they gain much more than just literacy.

Our literacy course is based on the Bible which is what our students insist on.

“We want more Bible” they frequently say in their course feedback comments.

One of the outcomes of the course this year will be the production of a set of easy to use Bible studies for students to take home and use in their communities.

Why is this course so important?

The recent release of the 2016 Closing the Gap Report by the Federal Government shows that while literacy levels for Indigenous Australians are improving, they are still a huge problem. According to the report only 38% of Indigenous students in the Northern Territory meet the National Minimum Standards for Literacy for Year 5. However, what the report doesn’t show is the ongoing effect of low levels of adult literacy for Indigenous people. Even if literacy rates are currently increasing in schools, that does not help those who have already passed through the school system.

Course Coordinator, Annette Anderson says “God promises us that His word will bear fruit (Isaiah 55:11). I pray that as students learn about what it means to be a follower of Jesus, this will shape their lives and they will share what they have learnt in their communities. I will encourage students to work through the new set of Bible studies with their church congregations when they return home.”

The Foundations Course is very important not just in helping students in their study of the Bible, but in preparing them for employment or other study. Most students who complete Foundations Studies indicate that they want to come back and study the Certificate III in Theology. They are also better equipped to undertake work back in their communities. Some employers are happy to allow students to have time off work to come and study because they recognise the benefit for their workplace.

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However, learning literacy in a language other than your own is very difficult. Some students come with only a basic understanding of the letters of the alphabet and a few words, while others can read short paragraphs. For many it is a long and slow journey.

There is opportunity for trained TESOL teachers to possibly come and volunteer at the College for a 4 week intensive. Last year we had two volunteers at just the right time as we had a group of young men needing one-on-one support.

Please continue to support Nungalinya College as we engage on this important work in not only closing the literacy gap but strengthening the church to share the good news of Jesus Christ in remote communities.

With thanks for your help,

Dr Jude Long
Principal
Nungalinya College